1699

The Council-General of the Indian *and* African *Company's Petition to His Majesty.*

May it please Your Majesty,

WE Your Majesty's most dutiful Subjects, the Council-General of the Company of *Scotland* Trading to *Africa* and the *Indies*, do do in all Humble Duty beg leave to lay before Your Majesty the present Condition of our Affairs.

Your Majesty from an earnest desire of the Flourishing of your Ancient Kingdom, having been graciously pleased by the 32 Act of the *4th.* Session, and by the *8th.* Act of the *5th.* Session of this Current Parliament, and Your Majesty's Letters Patent under the Great Seal of this Kingdom following thereupon, to Authorize *the Settling of Plantations and Colonies in* Asia, Africa, *or* America, *by the Natives of this Kingdom, and such Others as should joyn with them*, as in the said Acts of Parliament, and Letters Patent, is more particularly expres'd.

We and our Constituents, Your Majesty's most Loyal Subjects did, upon the Faith and Encouragement of the said Acts and Letters Patent, enter into a *Society*, Erect a *Company of Trade*, and with Great Charge, and after many Difficulties, settled a *Plantation* on the North-side of the *Isthmus* of *Darien*, a Place precisely in the Terms of the said Acts of Parliament and Letters Patent.

And being Sensible, That as our Company had its Birth from Your Majesty's most Gracious Favour, so it could not subsist but by your Royal Protection. We did therefore, in all humble Manner, Petition Your Majesty's *High Commissioner* and the *Estates of Parliament*, Assembled the *19th.* of *July* 1698.

Upon which, The *Estates of Parliament* did, with great Unanimity Address Your Majesty, *That you would in your Royal Wisdom be pleased, to take such Measures as might effectually Vindicat the undoubted Rights and Priviledges of the said Company, and support the Credit and Interest thereof.*

That Session of Parliament ending, before any Return could be had from Your Majesty; Reports have been spread by the Enemies of our Settlement, as if our Company had not Your Majesty's Protection: And as an Evidence thereof, That Proclamations have been Issued out in Your Majesty's Name, by your Governours in all the *American* Plantations, not only to Deprive our said Company and Colony of the friendly Assistance that might Reasonably have been expected from our Neighbour-Nation; But also, *strictly forbidding all Your Majesty's Subjects, or Others within these Plantations, to enter into any Traffick or Commerce with the said Colony, and that no Provisions, Arms, Ammunition, or other Necessaries whatsoever, should be Transported or Carried to them, either in their own Vessels, or any other Ship or Vessel for their Use, and that under the outmost Pains, Penalties, and Forfeitures*, mentioned in the said Proclamations.

Which Proceedings we have but too much Reason to believe, have been of Fatal Consequence to our Company and Colony, and consequently to the Interest of all Your Majesty's good Subjects in this Kingdom. And we being fully Perswaded, that nothing could be so Conducible for the Support of our said Company and Colony in our present Circumstances, as some special Testimonies and Evidences of your Royal Protection.

We

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We do therefore in all Humility and Earneſtneſs, beg of Your Majeſty's Fatherly Care of our ſaid Company in particular, and of the Nation in General, That Your Majeſty would be graciouſly pleaſed, to take off the Force and Effect of theſe Proclamations, which have been ſo Prejudicial to us, and to ſignify your Royal Pleaſure to the Governours of theſe your Plantations, that We may be ſupplyed in the Common and Ordinary way of Commerce.

As alſo, That Your Majeſty may allow your Parliament to Meet at the Day appointed in *November* next, or as ſoon as poſſibly can be, that Your Majeſty may have the Advice and Aſſiſtance of the Great Council of this Nation, in ſuch a Weighty and General Concern, which we hope God will Bleſs with an Happy Iſſue to His Glory, the Honour of your Majeſty, the Credit of your Parliament, the Intereſt of the Nation, and the Good of our Company and Colony.

Sign'd at Edinburgh *the* 19th. *Day of* October 1699. *In Name, Preſence, and by Order of the ſaid* Council-General, by

May it pleaſe Your MAJESTY,

John Carter Brown Library

Your Majeſty's moſt Faithful, moſt Dutiful, moſt Humble, and moſt Obedient Subject and Servant

BELHAVEN *I. P. C. G.*

RPJCB

To which His Majeſty was pleas'd to give the following Anſwer.

WILLIAM R.

Right Truſty and Well-beloved, we Greet you Well. Your Petition has been preſented to Us by Our Secretaries, and we do very much regret the loſs which that our Ancient Kingdom and the Company has lately ſuſtained: We will upon all Occaſions, Protect and Encourage the Trade of the Nation: And we will alſo take Care, that the Subjects of that our Kingdom, ſhall have the ſame freedom of Trade and Commerce with our *Engliſh* Plantations as ever they had formerly.

Our Current Parliament is Adjourn'd to the *5th.* Day of *March* next, and we will Order that the Parliament ſhall Meet when we judge that the Good of the Nation does require it. And ſo We bid you heartily Farewell. *Given at our Court at* Kenſingtoun *the* 2d. *day of* November 1699. *and of our Reign the* 11th. *Year.*

By His Majeſty's Command,
SEAFIELD.

To our Right Truſty and Well-beloved, the Council-General of the Company of our Ancient Kingdom of Scotland, *Trading to* Africa *and the* Indies.